

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 AID-05

IGA-02 OMB-01 MMO-01 PER-01 ABF-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /067 W

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O R 022236Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4027

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 8127

MEXICO FOR ASST SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, US, GT

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF MILITARY GROUPS

RE: (A) STATE 292128, (B) GUATEMALA 3357, (C) GUATEMALA 6988

1. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE U.S. INTERESTS BEST SERVED BY MAINTAINING MILGP GUATEMALA WITH ESSENTIALLY CURRENT FUNCTIONS THRU SEPT 30 1978 AS RECOMMENDED BY REFS B AND C. REDUCED ORGANIZATION DEDICATED PRIMARILY TO ADMINISTRATION OF IMET AND ASSISTANCE WITH FMS WOULD REPLACE MILGP EFFECTIVE OCT 1, 1978.

2. A MILGP REQUIRES AN OBSOLUTE MINIMUM MANNING LEVEL OF 8 US MILITARY PERSONNEL TO MEET TRADITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS OF GOG AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS
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OF SEPARATE DOD AGENCY. THE ADDITIONAL SPACE

RECOMMENDED IN REF B, WHICH CALLED FOR 9-MAN MILGP, WAS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR AT MILITARY ACADEMY WHICH WE ARE SEEKING TO ACCOMMODATE UNDER US ARMY OFFICER EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

3. RATHER THAN REDUCE MILGP TO LEVEL OF 6 OR FEWER MILITARY AND ATTEMPT TO RETAIN CURRENT FUNCTIONS, IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO EMBASSY, AND MORE UNDERSTANDABLE TO GOG, TO DISESTABLISH MILGP EFFECTIVE SEPT 30, 1977 AND REPLACE IT WITH IMET/FMS ASSISTANCE GROUP ON OCT 1, 1977. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO CALLING THIS GROUP OFFICE OF DEFENSE COOPERATION, AS PROPOSED EARLIER BY WASHINGTON, AND WE PREFER THAT TITLE TO MILGP TO AVOID CONFUSION AS TO PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS. IF THIS OPTION EXERCISE AND LEGISLATION MENTIONED PARA 2 REF A IS OBTAINED, WE RECOMMEND A MANNING LEVEL OF 4 US MILITARY FOR NEW OFFICE EVEN THOUGH 6 MIGHT BE AUTHORIZED BY NEW LEGISLATION.

4. WITH REGARD TO DESIRABILITY IN HOST GOVERNMENT EYES OF RETENTION OF SIZEABLE MILGP, THE TENSIONS OVER BELIZE AND THE WIDELY-HELD PERCEPTION THAT THE US HAS PLACED OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF GUATEMALA'S ATTEMPTS TO MODERNIZE ITS FORCES BECAUSE OF BRITISH PRESSURE, HAVE EXACERBATED OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ACCELERATED A REDUCTION IN THE MORE ACTIVIST ADVISORY ROLE IN WHICH WE PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED. THUS, A MAJOR REDUCTION IN MILGP STAFFING WOULD NOT BE THE SERIOUS MOVE IN GOG EYES THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN THREE YEARS AGO. AMONG THE MILITARY HIERARCHY, ONLY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF CAN BE EXPECTED TO REACT STRONGLY. (HE IS A PRODUCT OF THE US ARMY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND CONTINUES TO SEE CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT IN THE CLOSE ASSOCIATION -- EVEN IF IN NONSUBSTANTIVE AREAS -- BETWEEN HIS OFFICERS AND US OFFICERS.) SOME OTHER GENERAL OFFICERS MIGHT EXPLOIT THE ISSUE, HOWEVER, TO SUPPORT THEIR THESIS THAT US INTEREST IN GUATEMALA'S SECURITY IS NIL.
BOSTER

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